

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 FEA-01 EB-08

COME-00 TRSE-00 /073 W

-----232032 013817 /43

R 231613Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1914

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 1269

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA SUMMARY FOR FEB 23, 1977

1. LEAD STORIES IN MEDIA WERE MURDER OF DAMASCUS
UNIVERSITY RECTOR AND COMMEMORATION ANNIVERSARY OF SYRO-EGYPTIAN
UNION OF 1958. BLACK BORDERED BOXES REPORTED ASSASSINATION
AL-FADIL BY "EVIL TREACHEROUS HANDS." (SEE SEPTTEL NOTAL)

2. SPEECHES ON OCCASION OF SYRO-EGYPTIAN UNION DEALT
WITH IRAQ AND OIL-PRODUCING STATES. ATTACK ON OIL-
PRODUCING STATES PART OF RECENTLY ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN AGAINST
ARAB DONOR STATES (REPORTED SEPTTEL) FOR THEIR ALLEGED
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NIGGARDLINESS. SPEECHES MADE ON BEHALF OF BAATH
PARTY AND SYRIAN POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS DENOUNCED IRAQI
REGIME AND CALLED UPON IRAQI PEOPLE TO INTENSIFY THEIR
STRUGGLE AGAINST IT. SEPARATE ARTICLES DEALING WITH
EVENTS IN IRAQ NOTED "IRAQI NATIONAL BLOC" HAS ISSUED
STATEMENTS DURING PAST SEVERAL DAYS DENOUNCING TERRORIST
METHODS OF "TAKRITI TRIBAL REGIME". STATEMENTS CALLED

UPON IRAQIS TO TOPPLE REGIME. SAME ARTICLE CITED TRAVELERS FROM IRAQ WHO REPORTED THAT "ISLAMIC NATIONAL FRONT" HAD ISSUED SEVERAL COMMUNIQUE CONDEMNING IRAQI GOVERNMENT AND ACCUSING IT OF MASSACRES AT NAJAF AND KARBALA CONNECTED WITH ATTACKS ON SHIITE RELIGIOUS PROCESSION MARCHING TOWARDS KARBALA. PROCESSION ALLEGEDLY ATTACKED AT VILLAGE OF AL-HAYDARIYA. COMMUNIQUE ALLEGED SOME IRAQI TROOPS INITIALLY WENT OVER TO MARCHERS BEFORE BEING CONFRONTED BY TANKS. HUNDREDS REPORTEDLY WOUNDED. SECOND COMMUNIQUE CLAIMED 115 KILLED INCLUDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN NAJAF AND KARBALA IN RIOTS ARISING FROM REGIME'S ATTACK ON MARCHERS. MANY SYRIANS ALLEGEDLY ARRESTED IN IRAQ.

3. ARRIVAL OF GREEK FONMIN EVENING FEB 22 ALSO RECEIVED FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE. AT DINNER DIVEN IN HIS HONOR LAST EVENING, FONMIN SAID TO HAVE BACKED SYRIAN FORMULA OF FULL WITHDRAWAL AND RESTORATION PALESTINIAN RIGHTS.

4. PRESS ALSO COCERED ARRIVAL PLO DELEGATION TO OPEN TALKS ON RECONCILIATION WITH JORDAN. THOSE ATTENDING IN ADDITION TO DELEGATION LEADER KALID FAHUM INCLUDED: BAATHI SAMI AL-ATTARI; ARAFAT'S POLITICAL COUNSELOR, HANI AL-HASAN; AND DIRECTOR-GENERAL PLO POLITICAL DEPT. (NO. 2 OT QADDUMI), ABDUL-RAZZAQ AL-YAHYA. GROUP HELD THREE HOUR MEETING AT PRIME MINISTRY (PRESUMABLY WITH PRIMIN BADRAN) AND DISCUSSED RECENT VISITS OF UNSYG AND WESTERN FONMINS. TALKS SAID T O HAVE REVIEWED UNCLASSIFIED

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"FUTURE OF PALESTINIAN-JORDANINA RELATIONS." FAHUM GAVE ARRIVAL STATEMENT TO JORDAN NEWS AGENCY DECLARING PLO WOULD PLACE FIRST PRIORITY ON RELATIONS BETWEEN IT AND CONFRONTATION STATES.

6. SEVERAL EDITORIALS DEALT WITHMURDER OF UNIV. RECTOR. ONE DECLARED IT S AIM WAS TO CREATE UNREST AND CHAOS IN SYRIA AND ASSERTED THAT SYRIA WOULD NOT TOLERATE THIS. EDITORIAL ASSERTED SYRIA HAD ENOUGH EXPERIENCE TO WARD OFF ANY HARM. MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MURDER, PRESS SUMMARIES, TEACHERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770063-0162
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770218/aaaaaqfk.tel
Line Count: 108
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Sep-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3256151
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN MEDIA SUMMARY FOR FEB 23, 1977
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d23661c0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009